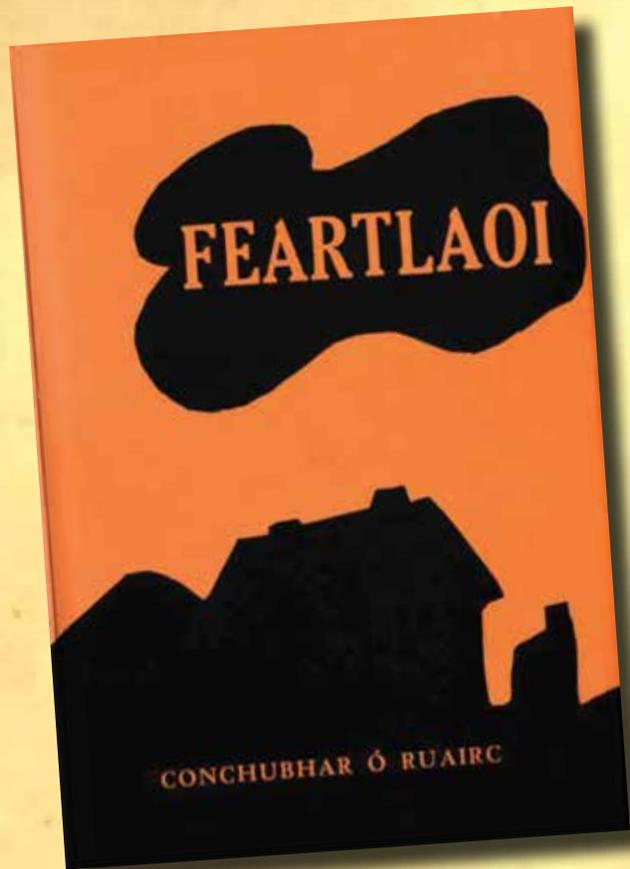




BANTRY
HISTORICAL
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SOCIETY

Poems by
Conchubhar Ó Ruairc





FEARTLAOI

Fearthlaoi translates as 'Epitaph'

About Conchubhar Ó Ruairc, the author

He was born on the margins of the Gaeltacht area in West Cork. When he developed an interest in the Irish language he found out that there was a wealth of Irish song and verse about small happenings in the area. These verses appealed to him and he began to compose verse himself in English and in Irish, as a pastime. This is the first collection.

Perhaps obscurity is the fashion in poetry but the author believes that there are many people who like their verse to be uncomplicated. If some of the content of this book satisfies these readers he will be happy.

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AN BÓTHAR NUA

Cá bhfuil an caidhséar a cheoladh t'réis síne,
Ag leathadh thar bhóthar is ag gearradh a thrinse,
Ag breith úrmhaireacht ghlaise don samhaircín Earraigh
Is deoch fhionnuar uisce do bha is do chapail.

Tá sceach na bpúcaí réabtha ó phréamha
Is bothán Dhónaill Bháin bhí aerach, d'éir scéala,
Ní fheicfear ann feasta púcaí an mheánoíche
Mar tá bóthar mór tarrach trín gCuasán ag síneadh.

An fuarán fíoruisce bhíodh criostalach glé
Tá thíos faoi na clocha, gaíon is ruachré,
Píobáin fhada phlaisteach anois in áit trinse
Mar tá bóthar dubh tarrach trín gCuasán ag síneadh.

Ní phollfar na rothair, ní scoithfear ann crú,
Ní fheicfear ladhair nochta, ag sileadh ó bhrú,
Ní iomlascóidh asail I smúit na sí-gaoithe
Mar tá bóthar breá tarrach trín gCuasán ag síneadh.

Mairfeam gan chaidhséar is mairfeam gan sceach,
Mairfeam gan bhotháin is gan scéalta na sean;
Ní mhairfeam gan daoine – A Dhia, sé mo chreach –
An bóthar breá tarrach – is An Cuasán gan teach.

The New Road

Where is the gully that sang in bad weather
Spilling on road and cutting a trench
Bringing sweet moisture to Spring and the primrose
And cool drinking water to horses and cows

The bush of the pooka is torn from its anchor
Like Donal Bán's cabin once known for its gaiety.
No more will be seen the pale ghost at midnight
Since the big tarry road was laid through Coosane.

The spring water fountain as lucid as crystal
Is buried neath rubble of stone and red clay.
Instead of a trench a long pipe of plastic
Since the black tarry road was laid through Coosane.

The bike won't be punctured the churn it won't spill
No more you'll see bare feet bloody and bruised.
The donkey won't stumble in the fairy wind mist
Since the fine tarry road was laid through Coosane.

We'll live without gully, we'll live without bush
We'll live without cabins without stories of old.
But to live without people - dear God it is woeful
A fine tarry road - but no house in Coosane.

THE TRUTH

I described the storm,
Shipwrecks, looting and panic,
Towns under water,
After last night's deluge.

I knew she was ever interested in news
Of her eagerness for the paper,
Her interest in the western world
Where she'd spent a spell of her life.

Before I parted at midnight
From that blind enquiring woman
Her hand clutched my elbow
And she secretly asked me

Would you tell me the truth
Sean wouldn't tell me
Was the roof of the henhouse
Swept away last night?

An Fhírinne

Thrácht mé ar an stoirm,
Longbháthadh, creach is scaol,
Bailte bhí faoi uisce
Tar éis anfa na hóiche aréir.

B'eol dom a dúil I nuacht riamh
A cíocras chun páipéar
A suim sa domhan tiar
Inar chaith sí cuid dá saol.

Sular fhág mé slán meánoíche
Ag an dall-bhean fhiosrach úd
Ghreamaigh lámh im uillinn
Is d'fhiafraigh díom faoi rún

An inseofá dom an fhírinne
Ní inseodh Seán dom é,
Ar scuabadh díon an chró-chearc
Le gaoith na hóiche aréir?

COMING BACK

The stamp of their hands on an outhouse
The sweat of their bones in a field
So long as their names survive
Their work will live in stone.

Nothing on earth will I leave behind
But the word printed on the wind
In a tongue forsaken by my elders
As I have forsaken the sod.

I don't blame them for giving up
The wheel of destiny on their backs
But for me the road is hard
Coming back to my native place.

An Filleadh

Tá lorg a lámh ar chró
Allas a gcnámh I ngort
Fad mhairfidh a sloinne beo
Mairfidh a n-obair I gcloch.

Ní fheicfear dem éis ar thalamh
Ach focail le gaoith I gcló
I dteanga a thréig mo shinsear
Mar a thréigeas-sa an fód.

Ní thógaim orthu an tréigean.
Bhí rotha an tsaoil á mbrú,
Ach anróch liom an bealach
Ag filleadh ar mo dhúchas.

smacht

Chonaic mé sléibhte uaim thuaidh agus theas,
Ardspuaic na Gaibhle is Seithe na sleas;
Ba mhian liom a ndreapadh dtí an mullach
Ach bhí sciolláin le cur is tornaip le stath.

Chonaic mé leabhair ar sheilfeanna ard,
Smaointe na bhfílí is saothar na mbard;
Ba mhian liom a léamh, a ngreann is a ngáir
Ach bhí scrúdú le seasamh I stair is pársáil.

Chonaic mé leanbh, im cheacht bhí neamhshuim,
B'fhile ina mheon é, b'fhile é ón mbroinn;
Bhíos-sa á chalcadh le heolas tur seasc
Mar d'éileodh an scrúdú an freagra ceart.

Chonaic Ádhamh an t-úll I ndeasóg a mhná
Is ghéill sé don chathú thug mise im chás;
Ní ghéillfeadh go luath ná ní ghéillfeadh go brách
Dá mbeadh sé ag plé le stair nó sciolláin.

Discipline

I saw the hills away from me north and south
The high point of the Sugarloaf, the slopes of Sheha.
I had a great longing to fly up with the gull
But there were sprouters to set, turnips to pull.

I saw books arranged on shelves that were high
The musings of poets, the learning of bards.
I yearned to read them for fun and for laughter
But there were tests to be done in history and grammar.

I saw a child pay no heed to my lesson
His spirit was lyric, a poet from the womb.
I crammed him with detail so dry and so barren
To sit the exam and have the right answer.

Adam saw the apple in the right hand of Eve
He gave in to temptation that gave me much grief.
He would never have yielded for now or forever
If he had to struggle with history or sprouter.

TRÉIGINT

Aníos as an gcréafóg trí scratha is liaga,
Trí chlocha neamhghreanta, trí leaca is fiaile,
Glaonn na taisí, fuarchnámha lomghágach' –
Taisí an Ghorta, Land League is troid bráthar;
Fir a shil allas, a chruinnigh pian cnámha,
Mná nár bhlaiss sonas, sólás, ná sámhán,
Leanaí a bhí sean sular deonadh an aois dóibh,
Fir óga thug dúshlán screalm is riasca.

A nguth ar an ngaoith ó reilig go ré
Trí scabhaitín an ghleanna de dhroim tithe caoch,
Á fhiafraí dá sliocht, an beagán tá beo ann:
Bhfuil coipeadh na fola ina gcuisleanna dreoite,
Bhfuil fuath ag fir óga don ghnéas a thug beo dóibh,
Bhfuil borradh na beatha I gcruinnchíocha reoite,
Bhfuil mallacht na seascaíochta dlite san fheoil dóibh
Nó an tráill iad ag saothrú is ag síorchnósach.

Ó Charraig an Bharraigh tig scréac uafar caobaí
Tá ar lonnadh san ionad thug cúig ghlún ar an saol,
Tá an luachair sa mhóinteán, an dris I mbéal bearnan,
Glogar an phortaigh mar a mbíodh an gairdín.
Gan fear ar an mbaile le miangas nó sracadh
Chun clann mhac a thógáil ar mhoing ná ar leaca.

Desertion

Up from the clay through boulder and scraw
Through sloping stony scrub and weeds
Icy ghosts bareboned and maimed call.
Spectres of Famine, Civil War, Land League
Men who sweated, men with bruised limbs
Women denied comfort consolation or peace
Children denied youth, old before their time
Young lads who challenged scree and slime.

Voices upon the wind from churchyard to moorland
Down the alleys of the glens over cabins darkened
Asking the few of their seed who survived:
Is the hot blood in their veins turned cold ?
Do the young bucks reject the life-giving lust?
Has the milk in firm breasts gone dry?
Their flesh fated to be cursed and barren?
Are they just slaves to toil and to gather?

The sad answer comes in the harsh call of the ravens
Now lording the holding that fed five generations:
The rush in the haggard, the briar in the gap
In place of the garden the bogwater laps
No man in the village with vigour or ardour
To raise a strong brood on swamp or on leaca



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